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ABSTRACT

The terms, definitions, and procedures used by states in obtaining student counts are investigated as part of the Education Data Improvement Project of the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Project describes state collection of data elements currently contained in the common core of data of the National Center for Education Statistics. In this first year of the Project, the focus was on school and school district universe files for: (1) describing states collecting specific data elements; (2) giving the definitions and specifications used by each of the states; and (3) isolating discrepancies in the ways different states define and measure various elements. Current universe files contain listings of every elementary and secondary public school (approximately 87,000) and approximately 16,000 public school districts in the country. This report describes the types of data generally available on student counts; discusses specific findings on terms, definitions, and procedures used by individual states and nationally for student counts; and recommends ways to make specific student counts comparable across states. Findings are summarized in seven tables, which make these comparisons possible. (SLD)

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State Education Assessment Center

Education Data Improvement Project

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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December 1986

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VARIATIONS IN DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT COUNTS: ENROLLMENT, FALL ENROLLMENT, MEMBERSHIP AND AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP

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Improving Universe Data on Schools and School Districts

VARIATIONS IN DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT COUNTS: ENROLLMENT, FALL ENROLLMENT, MEMBERSHIP AND AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP

December 1986

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to the
State Profiles of School and School District Universe Data

The Common Core of Data Coordinators, designated by their chief state school officers as the official state liaisons with the Center for Statistics, are the primary respondents to the Project. The data presented here could not have been developed without substantial efforts by these data coordinators, who provided the information necessary to present state by state comparisons of data collection practices. Many thanks to those listed below who were instrumental in completing the questionnaire and kindly providing further information via telephone calls and verification procedures.

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PREFACE

This document is one of a series of reports resulting from the Council of Chief State School Officers' Education Data Improvement Project. The Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics, is a joint effort of the states and the federal government to improve the quality and timeliness of data collected, analyzed and reported by the Center. The Project was initiated by the Council as the first effort of its State Education Assessment Center and coincided with the Department of Education's extensive redesign of the national elementary/secondary education statistical data system. Improvement of the Center's Common Core of Data collected annually from state education agencies is the Project's primary goal.

In November, 1984, the Council of Chief State School Officers voted to "work actively with the National Center for Education Statistics (currently the Center for Statistics) to ensure that reporting of data from all sources is accurate and timely." This vote committed the Council to improving the comprehensiveness, comparability, and timeliness of data reported to the Center for Statistics by the state education agencies.

In several recent speeches and interviews, Chester E. Finn, Jr., Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), listed four goals for strengthening the nation's ability to achieve educational excellence. The Department of Education's primary goal—to significantly improve the nation's educational statistical information base, both in the amount and quality of data—suggests substantial interest in the work and goals of the Education Data Improvement Project.

The Center for Statistics and the states jointly share responsibility for a statistical system in education that is inadequate for today's needs. This project is one effort wherein they are working together to make the basic system efficient and effective.

The goals of the Project are to describe state collection of data elements currently contained in the Common Core of Data, to describe those elements that might be added to make the Common Core of Data adequate and appropriate for reporting on the condition of the nation's schools, and to make recommendations to states and the Center for Statistics for making the Common Core of Data more comprehensive, comparable and timely.

During this first year of the Project, the focus has been on the school and school district universe files for the purposes of (1) identifying states collecting specific data elements, (2) specifying in detail the definitions and specifications used by each of the states for each data element, and (3) isolating discrepancies in ways different states define and measure those various elements. This current report presents summaries of individual state practices for a particular set of universe terms and data elements.

INTRODUCTION

Universe Data on Schools and School Districts

The Council of Chief State School Officers, jointly with the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics, is conducting a project to improve the quality and timeliness of nationally reported data on elementary and secondary education. The Education Data Improvement Project was designed to promote and facilitate the reform and refinement of the Center for Statistics' national education data system.

One major aspect of the Project is a systematic assessment and comparison of state collection practices for school and school district universe data. The current universe files contain listings of every elementary and secondary public school (approximately 87,000) and all local public school districts (approximately 16,000) in every state, U. S. Territory, and the District of Columbia. There are three major purposes for universe files: (1) to provide official state-by-state listings of public elementary and secondary schools and school districts in this country, (2) to provide minimum information necessary for selection of national, regional and state representative samples of schools and school districts, and (3) to provide basic statistical data about all schools and school districts.

Project Processes and Analyses

The Education Data Improvement Project's data collection process is multifaceted: data are collected from several sources and supplemented either by individual and group interviews, or by task forces and study

groups. A major data source for the Project is a questionnaire (called a "Shuttle") on definitions and procedures that states use for a set of 17 terms and 17 data elements and their corresponding definitions and procedures. The questionnaire was called a shuttle because after the Project initially filled in states' data, the instrument made frequent trips between states and the Project for correction/validation of information on data collection, definitions and specifications. Over several iterations, true state and national profiles emerged. Where discrepancies in definitions and measurement procedures were found across a number of states, meetings will be convened to arrive at consensus on specific data elements. Where problems were found with a single state or with a few states, negotiations will establish crosswalks[1] between the state(s) and the Center for Statistics. Where states have better, more efficient definitions and procedures than currently used by the Center for Statistics, recommendations will be made to change the national system.

This Report

The first year of the Project is described in a series of reports under the general title, "Improving Universe Data on Schools and School Districts." This report is part of that series; other reports in the series include "Technical Report: Conceptual Framework," "Development of a Shuttle for Verifying Data Elements Collected by State Departments of Education and Reported to the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics," and "A Compendium: State Profiles of School and School District Universe Data." Several white papers complete the series, including "Data Elements on the School and School District Universe Files to Permit Sampling for National, Regional, and State Studies," "Federal

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[1] A crosswalk provides a method for translating data collected by states into categories and definitions comparable to those proposed by the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Statistics. This allows states to maintain the data for their own purposes while providing a bridge to the national educational data system.

Program Information on School and School District Universe Files," "School and Student Classifications for Universe Data Files", and "Collecting National Statistics on Dropouts." This report, "Variations in Definitions and Procedures for Student Counts: Enrollment, Fall Enrollment, Membership, and Average Daily Membership," describes state practices for student counts that are being considered for the revised universe files.

The purposes of this report are (1) to describe types of data generally avaliable from states on student counts, (2) to discuss specific findings on terms, definitions, and procedures used by individual states and nationally for student counts, and (3) to recommend ways in which specific student counts can be made comparable across states.

State-by-state findings on each of the student counts are summarized in tables that appear in the text or Appendix of this report. The tables are presented so that comparisons can be made across states and judgments can be made for the improvement of the comprehensiveness of national statistics.

AVAILABILITY OF STATE-BY-STATE STUDENT COUNT DATA

The methodology used by the Project to gather data on student counts included a telephone survey of all states and an iterative questionnaire (Shuttle).

Telephone Survey Data

Project staff conducted a telephone survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia in January, 1986 to determine the availability of enrollment data in states. The Project's contacts were the Common Core of Data Coordinators who were asked: (1) does the state collect a student enrollment count? (2) can the count be reported by school? by grade? (3) is the count taken at least annually? and (4) when is the count available for reporting?

The term "enrollment" was used loosely in this survey of the states; the intent was to determine which states can give a total count of their students by grade. The primary finding was that all states and the District of Columbia have an annual total count of students. Table 1--Enrollment by Grade by School: Telephone Survey Data--presents individual state responses to questions 2, 3, and 4.

A summary of the survey's findings is that:

1) Of the fifty-one respondents, forty-eight states can report an enrollment count by grade by school; an additional two states can report enrollment counts by grade by district; and, the remaining state can report by grade groups by school;
2) Five states specify that they use a count other than enrollment, e.g., membership or fall enrollment;
3) Forty-five states can report their enrollment count by March 15; two more can report by April.

Profile Survey Data

In the telephone survey states often either said or implied that what they call enrollment is different from the Center for Statistics' definition of the term. The next phase of the project was conducted to explore these differences, to identify them, and to establish a basis for common terms.

A "Shuttle" questionnaire provided the principal data used by the project to develop individual state profiles to define student count data. The profiles are operational descriptions of data collection practices in each state. Comprehensive profile data were supplemented by data gathered earlier during the January telephone survey. The additional exchange between states and the Project allowed states (1) to specify if they collect "enrollment" and "membership," (2) to indicate whether these

Table 1
Enrollment by Grade by School-
Telephone Survey Data

State	Collects Enrollment Data		Problems Reporting this Data to Center	Fall '85 Enroll. Data Available
	By Grade By School	At Least Annually		
Alabama	Yes	Yes		Feb. 86
Alaska	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Arizona	Yes	Yes		Jan. 87
Arkansas	Yes	Yes		Jan. 14, 86
California	Yes	Yes		Mar. 1, 86
Colorado	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Connecticut	Yes	Yes		Feb. 1, 86
Delaware	Yes	Yes		Nov. 20, 85
Dist. of Columbia	Yes	Yes		Jan. 17, 86
Florida	Yes	Yes		Jan. 14, 86
Georgia	Yes	Yes		Jan. 26, 86
Hawaii	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Idaho	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Illinois	Yes	Yes		Jan. 1, 86
Indiana	Yes	Yes		Jan. 1, 86
Iowa	Yes	Yes		Jan. 1, 86
Kansas	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Kentucky	Yes	Yes		Nov. 85
Louisiana	No	Yes	Can only report by grade by district now. Later may be able to report by school.	Aug. 86
Maine	Yes	Yes		Nov. 15, 85
Maryland	Yes	Yes		Jan. 86
Massachusetts	Yes	Yes		Jan. 1, 86
Michigan	Yes	Yes	May be duplicative. Does not include part-time students.	Mar. 1, 86
Minnesota	Yes	Yes		Nov. 15, 85
Mississippi	Yes	Yes		Nov. 85
Missouri	Yes	Yes	If data are not already broken down this way on the tape, it will be a problem to report.	Jan. 14, 86
Montana	Yes	Yes	Wants CEIS approval	Jan. 15, 86

Table 1 (Cont'd)
Enrollment by Grade by School-
Telephone Survey Data

State	Collects Enrollment Data			Fall '85 Enroll. Data Available
	By Grade By School	At Least Annually	Problems Reporting this Data to Center	
Nebraska	Yes	Yes	State considers September 31 "membership" count the enrollment count.	Jan 15, 86
Nevada	Yes	Yes	On tape its by district, they will have to break down to school level.	Jan. 15, 86
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes		Feb. 1, 86
New Jersey	Yes	Yes		Dec. 15, 85
New Mexico	Yes	Yes		Jan. 31, 86
New York	Yes	Yes		Apr. 1, 86
North Carolina	Yes	Yes		Jan. 86
North Dakota	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Ohio	Yes	Yes		Feb. 15, 86
Oklahoma	Yes	Yes	If Center needs these data prior to 3/1 each year it will be a problem.	Mar. 86
Oregon	Yes	Yes	October 1 count is considered "membership" by state but is VERY close to enrollment.	Jan. 15, 86
Pennsylvania	Yes	Yes		Mar. 15, 86
Rhode Island	Yes	Yes		Nov. 15, 85
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	For reporting purposes, the State considers enrollment and pupil count (ADM) the same.	Aug. 86
South Dakota	Yes	Yes		Jan. 15, 86
Tennessee	Yes	Yes	See Oregon	Apr. 86
Texas	No	Yes	Can only report by grade by district. No other reporting problem if Fall membership is acceptable for enrollment.	Jan. 14, 86
Utah	Yes	Yes	Don't usually breakdown by schools, but it is available and can be broken down.	Jan. 15, 86
Vermont	No	Yes	By grade groupings within a school, e.g., K-6 enrollment.	Aug. 1 86
Virginia	Yes	Yes	If Center needs these data on tape it will be a problem. Can send hard copy, however.	Jan. 14, 86
Washington	Yes	Yes		Jan. 31, 86
West Virginia	Yes	Yes		Aug. 86
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes		Feb. 1, 86
Wyoming	Yes	Yes		Mar. 86

counts are available by grade, by sex, or by race/ethnic group at the school and district levels, and (3) to describe more precisely how they collect the data. State responses to the survey that are presented in this section relate to the first two areas listed above. State responses to the third area are discussed in the next major section of this report.

Student Count Data Collected by States

Information obtained from states for the Profiles confirmed the earlier finding: all of the forty-nine states responding to the request for Profile data can report an annual total count of students. Table 2—Enrollment and Membership by Grade by Sex by Race/Ethnic: Individual State Profile Data—shows that all states collect either enrollment or membership or both for public school students. In addition, all forty-nine states can report a count by grade. Thirty-eight (76%) of the states can report a total student count by sex; forty (82%) of the states can report by race and ethnic group; and thirty-five (71%) can report by sex and race/ ethnic group data.

Table 2

Enrollment and Membership by Grade
by Sex by Race/Ethnic-
Individual State Profile Data

	enrollment	membership	grade	sex	race/ethnic
Alabama	●	●	●	●	●
Alaska					
Arizona	●	●	●	●	●
Arkansas	●	●	●	●	●
California	●		●	●	●
Colorado		●	●	●	●
Connecticut	●	●	●	○	●
Delaware	●		●		●
Dist. of Columbia		●	●	●	●
Florida		●	●	●	●
Georgia	●		●		
Hawaii		●	●	●	●
Idaho	●	●	●		
Illinois	●		●	●	●
Indiana	●	●	●	●	●
Iowa	●	○	●	●	●
Kansas	●		●	●	●
Kentucky	●	●	●	●	●
Louisiana		●	●	●	●
Maine	●	○	●	●	●
Maryland		●	●	●	●
Massachusetts	●	●	●	●	●
Michigan		●	●		●
Minnesota	●	●	●	●	●
Mississippi	●	●	●		
Missouri	●	○	●		
Montana					
Nebraska	●		●	●	●
Nevada	●		●	●	●
New Hampshire	○	○	○	○	
New Jersey	●		●	●	●
New Mexico	○	○	○		
New York	●	○	●		●
North Carolina	●	●	●	●	●
North Dakota	●	●	●	●	●
Ohio		●	●	●	●
Oklahoma	●	●	●	●	●
Oregon	●	●	●		●
Pennsylvania		●	●		●
Rhode Island	●		●	●	●
South Carolina	●	●	●	●	●
South Dakota		●	●	●	○
Tennessee	●	●	●	●	●
Texas	○	●	●	●	●
Utah	●	●	●	●	●
Vermont	●		●	●	●
Virginia	○	●	●	○	
Washington		●	●	●	●
West Virginia	●		●	●	
Wisconsin	●	●	●	●	●
Wyoming	●	○	●		
School =	39	31	47	35	39
District =	4	7	2	3	1
Total =	38 (76%)	38 (76%)	49 (100%)	38 (76%)	40 (82%)
Availability of either enrollment or membership =	49 (100%)				

● = available at school level ○ = available at district level

Alaska and Montana did not participate in the study (N = 49).

VARIATIONS IN TERMINOLOGY, DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR STATE REPORTING OF STUDENT COUNTS

The apparent discrepancy in the number of states reporting the availability of "enrollment" for the January survey (51 states) and the number for the Profile (38 out of 49 responding states) is a function of the generic use of the term "enrollment" by the Project staff during the telephone survey. An alternative term, "membership," was included in the Profile survey, giving states an option to the term "enrollment."

Comparability Issues for Student Counts

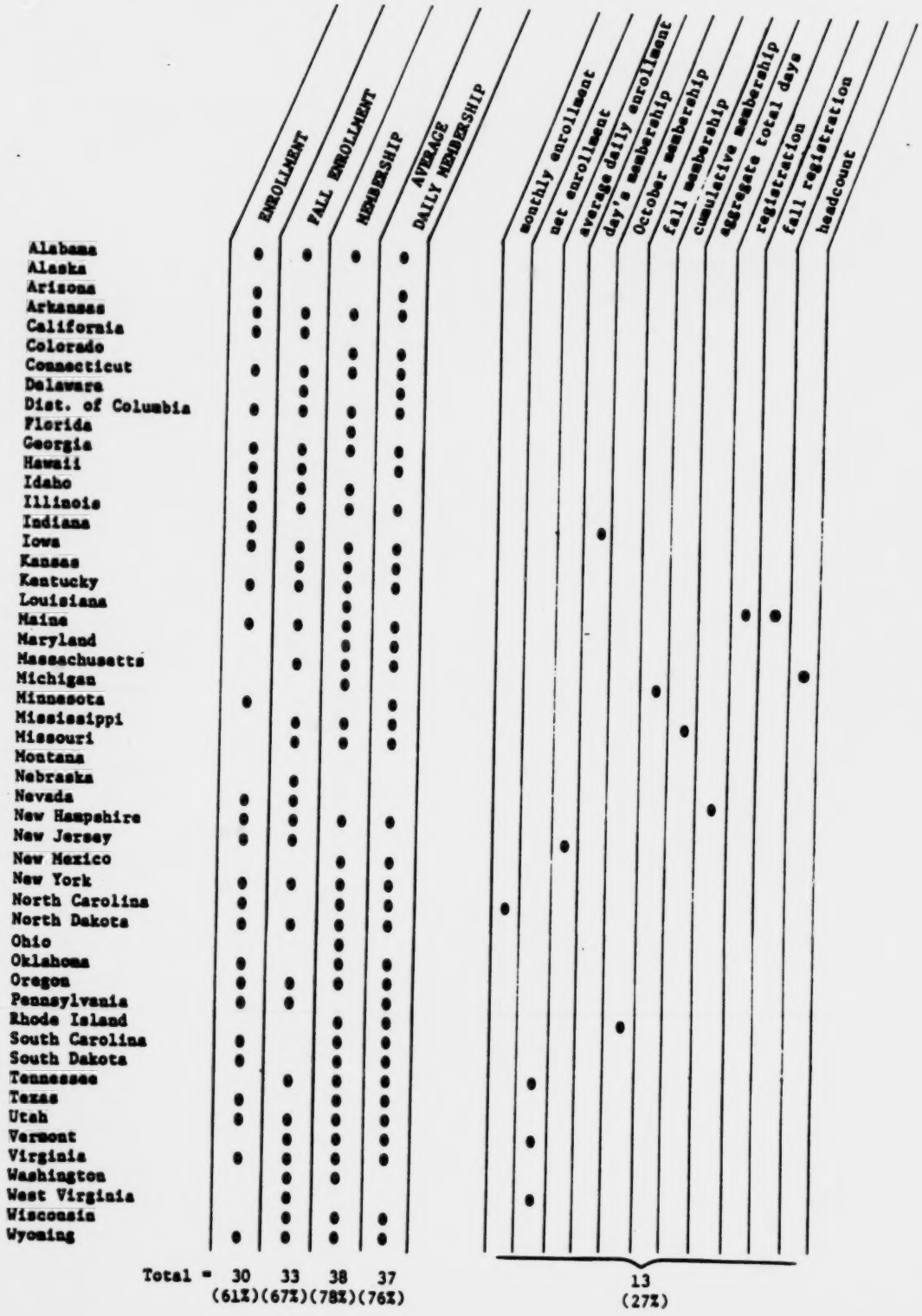
In describing how their student counts data are collected, state coordinators revealed a variety of issues in comparability of data across states. The first of these issues is the variation among states in the terms they use to refer to their student counts. The second issue is variation in the definitions and procedures used for student counts. In this section, a discussion on terminology is followed immediately by a detailed description of Project findings across states on definitions and procedures used for student counts.

Terminology:

The Project presented to states terms and definitions commonly used to refer to four student counts to states on the profile survey form: enrollment, fall enrollment, membership, and average daily membership. Profile data shown in the Appendix indicates whether a state calls profile definitions by one of these four common terms or by an alternative term. The use of alternative terms (variations) complicates interpretation of student count data reported by states to the Center for Statistics.

Table 3

Terms States Use For Their Student Counts



Alaska and Montana did not participate in the study (N=49)

Table 3—Terms States Use For Their Student Counts—summarizes profile data by showing the various terms states use to refer to student counts. The table shows that thirty states have a count called "enrollment," thirty-three states have a term called "fall enrollment," thirty-eight states have "membership," and thirty-seven have a count they call "average daily membership." In a later section of this report, differences in how states use these terms will be discussed.

In addition to these basic terms, eleven different alternative terms were used across all states for the definitions and procedures the project presented. The alternative terms vary around (1) when a count is taken (e.g., "fall" registration, "fall" membership, "monthly" enrollment, "October" membership, and "day's" membership) and (2) how, at least partially, a count is calculated (e.g., "net" enrollment, "cumulative" membership, "average daily enrollment," and "aggregate" total days). Other alternative terms do not suggest when or how the count is taken: "registration" and "headcount."

Inconsistent and imprecise use of terms for student counts has been a problem for the Center for Statistics. During the recent 1986 training for state Common Core of Data Coordinators, the Center staff used the terms "enrollment" and "membership" interchangeably and made little or no distinction between their interpretations of the terms. On 1985-86 forms, the Center asks for student counts in three different parts of the common core of data. For the public school universe, an unduplicated count broken down by grade is requested. For the school district universe, a fall count of total students instructed is reported. For the SEA non-fiscal report, an October count of students by grade is requested. Center uses of the terms on their data collection forms and in their guidelines for completing the forms are, at times, inconsistent with their published definitions of those terms. (It should be pointed out that official definitions of terms are contained in Center-published handbooks, some of which have not been revised for over two decades.)

Despite Center requests for different counts it calls "enrollment" and "membership," some states submit the same count for both requests, and this count is usually a fall count of students enrolled in school. On the other hand, when states submit different counts to respond to the requests for apparently different data, the Center's computer checks identify those states as submitting inconsistent counts. In a recent summary of data concerns, the Center for Statistics' staff displayed these different counts as examples of inconsistent reporting by states.

In sum, the terms in use for the same counting procedures vary from state to state and between states and the Center. These variations cause confusion and may affect comparison of data when "headcount," "registration," and "membership," for example, are reported by three different states to the Center for Statistics' as "enrollment" data. Confusion is added when the Center for Statistics requests "membership" in one section of the Common Core of Data report and "enrollment" in another section.

Findings on Comparability

Not only are there variations in terms used by states and the Center in describing the commonly reported counts of students in schools, there are also variations in definitions of, and procedures for, collecting and reporting those counts among states and between states and the Center for Statistics. For example, the Center for Statistics' procedure for counting enrollment specifies that no students should be subtracted from the count; however, some states do subtract certain students. Some states exclude pre-kindergarten students from their total student counts while other states include these students. Given these and similar conditions, the question is "how comparable are data on student counts across states?"

Following are discussions of specific comparability issues related to the definitions of the four basic student counts identified in this report: enrollment, fall enrollment, membership, and average daily membership. These findings are summarized across state practices reported on individual profiles reported through the Shuttle questionnaires. Full profile data are included in "A Compendium: State Profiles of School and School District Universe Data."

Enrollment

The Center's definition of enrollment is:

> A cumulative count of the number of different pupils registered during the entire school year. New entrants are added, but those leaving are not subtracted.

The project reformulated this definition displaying its semantic components more clearly, so that variations states use in defining enrollment would be more readily apparent. The reformatted definition is as follows:

> Count of students registered during entire school year:
>
> o adds new entrants as part of cumulative count,
> o does not subtract those leaving,
> o is unduplicated count of students.

Table 4--State-by-State Components of the Definition of Enrollment--in the Appendix summarizes definitions and procedures submitted by states for their individual state profiles. States were requested to match names for student counts with their definitions and calculating procedures, using the Project's basic definitions and procedures to provide more detailed, state-specific definitions. Table 4 shows that states differ from each other and from the Center for Statistics in the definitions they use when they respond to requests for "enrollment" data. Uses of different definitions (and terms) suggest that "enrollment" as defined and computed by a given state is not the same as that computed by other states and may not represent exactly what the Center assumes it represents.

Thirty-eight states report collecting an enrollment count. Of these thirty-eight states, thirty-two provided information on their comparability with the Center definition for enrollment. Twenty-seven of these agreed with all three elements of the definition: addition of new entrants, no subtraction of students leaving, and unduplication of counts within schools (e.g., if a student leaves and re-enrolls, he/she is not counted twice). Three states agreed with the first and third elements but

not with the second; these states do subtract students who leave. Another state has a similiar count called "registration;" and three additional states have counts they call "net enrollment." One state uses membership as an enrollment count.

The Profiles revealed that even when states agree with the Center's definition, they may have other definitional elements which cause them to vary in ways that have measurement implications. For example, nine states that agree with at least two of the three elements of the Center's definition identified additional procedures they use to calculate enrollment. Their state-specific procedures may account for numeric differences between their counts and other states' counts.

The additional procedures in use by these nine states related to who is included or excluded from their counts. Besides the three states that subtract from their counts any students who leave school, three other states explicitly exclude pre-school students, two exclude students in special programs such as children's centers or community service programs, and one state explicitly includes tuitioned-out students. Additional procedures in use by states also related to when states take their counts: two states reported that they count students prior to the end of the school year.

Variations are not viewed by the project as correct or incorrect; they are seen as evidence that states have different terms and definitions for what the project and Center for Statistics call "enrollment."

Fall Enrollment

A statistic related to enrollment is fall enrollment. Fall enrollment is commonly reported to the National Education Association (NEA). The project started with NEA's definition:

> The count of pupils registered in the fall of the school year, usually the fourth Friday count in September or an October 1 count.

The term fall enrollment was reformulated to read:

Count of students registered in fall of school year:

- o counted on specified day,
- o counted on fourth Friday in September or October 1

States were asked to consider this definition in providing information about their own state-specific definition for fall enrollment. Table 5—State-By-State Components of the Definition of Fall Enrollment—in the Appendix summarizes the definitions states use for fall enrollment.

The basic definition commonly used by NEA and provided on the profiles is limited to specification of <u>when</u> states are to count fall enrollment rather than <u>how</u> states are to calculate the count. When states responded to this definition in describing their own procedures, they confined their comments to when the count should be taken in the state. As a result, for the purpose of this discussion it is assumed that when states take a fall count they use the same procedures for fall enrollment that they use for an enrollment count. This assumption was not tested in this study; however, if it is true, the same issues which prevent valid comparisons of enrollment data across states also would pertain to fall enrollment data.

Profile data indicated that forty-four states report the use of the term "fall enrollment" or an alternative term for a fall count. Two states agreed with the basic NEA statement "counted on a specified day," but did not indicate the date they use. Seventeen states agreed with the basic NEA component that reads "counted on fourth Friday in September or October 1." Twenty-five states indicated data collection dates, but varied from the NEA dates: eleven states that take a fall count sometime in September; another four states that take a count sometime in October; three states that count in the fall on the second or fourth Friday after Labor Day; and seven other states that do not report having a specific month for their fall count, but require a certain number of days to pass before taking a count. (Of these seven states, one state takes the count

on the fortieth day of school, five states take the count on the twentieth day students have been in attendance, and one state takes a fall count on the teachers' eighth working day.)

Overall, state practices for "fall enrollment" expand the previous findings on enrollment: forty-two states take a count in the fall between the opening of school and October 31, but most use varying procedures for doing so.

Membership

Membership is a statistic requested by the Center for Statistics' Common Core of Data. The Center's definition of membership is:

> The number of pupils on the current roll of a school on a given date. Membership is obtained by adding the total number of original entries and the total number of reentries and subtracting the total withdrawals, or by adding the total number present and the total number absent.

This definition and procedures were reformulated by the Project and read:

> Count of students on current roll on a given date:
>
> - sums original entries and reentries, subtracts total withdrawals, or
> - sums total present and total absent.

States were asked for the same type of information for the term "membership" as they were asked for "enrollment" and "fall enrollment" the name they use in the state for data reported as "membership" and the specific definitions and calculating procedures they use for the count, using the Center's reformulated definition as the starting point. As stated earlier, thirty-eight states report collecting a "membership" count. Profile data, summarized in the Appendix in Table 6—State-By-State Components of the Definition of Membership—show that forty states

provided information on their definitions of the term membership. Some states have definitions of the term, even though they do not take the count or make the count available to the Center for Statistics.

A given state is expected to use only one or the other calculating procedures identified in the Center's definition. All forty states that provided information on how they define "membership" agree with one of these statements: "sums original entries and reentries, subtracts total withdrawals," or "sums total present and total absent."

Although forty states agreed with one or the other of the Center's basic components, seven of these states have additional components that cause variation between their calculating procedures and the Center's recommended procedures: two states exclude Pre-K students; two states use a full time equivalency basis (FTE) to calculate membership; and, three states identify specific dates for their membership count.

Average Daily Membership (ADM)

The final student-count variable discussed by this report is "average daily membership." The count is defined by the Center as:

> An average of the pupils belonging, those present plus those absent, when schools are actually in session.

The reformulated definition/procedure reads:

> Average of students in membership when school is actually in session:
>
> o divides (total) aggregate days in membership by total number of days school is actually in session.

A summary of the Profile information on "average daily membership" appears in the Appendix of this report in Table 7--State-By-State Components of the Definition of Average Daily Membership.

States responded to basic definitions and procedures initially entered onto the profile form by the project staff. In responding to their preliminary status coded on the form, they were asked to verify or to describe in greater detail their state-specific definitions and procedures. The profile data showed that thirty-eight out of the forty-nine states responding to the profile survey have a definition of "average daily membership." All thirty-eight states indicated agreement with the Center's single definitional component: "divides (total) aggregate days in membership by total number of days school is in session."

Profile data indicated that four states use supplemental, state-specific components in addition to the Center's definition. Of these four states, two use the specific component "determined by number of FTE students;" another state uses "determined by average of the number of students on roll at the 20th and 40th day of school;" and the fourth state uses "determined over eight specified weeks."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this paper has been on terminology, definitions and procedures used for state-by-state reporting of the number of students in the nation's public schools. The student counts described are those reported by states to the Center for Statistics for its common core of data report and to other groups that compile national data on education data. Included in the counts are enrollment, fall enrollment, membership, and average daily membership.

Project data showed that across states there is a general understanding of what is meant by each count. Enrollment is the total number of students registered for instruction in a school in a given year. Fall Enrollment is the total number of students registered by a given date within the first two months of the school year. Membership is enrollment minus withdrawals. Average Daily Membership is the membership count over a specified period of time divided by the number of days in the period. Problems in comparability arise when states vary in the ways that they compute these student counts to meet the needs of their individual state data system and when these figures are reported nationally as representing the same concepts.

It is the purpose of the Education Data Improvement Project to make recommendations to standardize the statistics reported by states to the Center for Statistics so that comparisons can be made across states. There are three overall observations that underpin the recommendations: (1) every state currently counts the number of students it educates, and most have a fall count, (2) the terms in use for student count statistics have come to be used interchangeably over time by both states and the Center for Statistics, and, (3) in some states, current statistics on students and their calculations are prescribed by laws and regulations.

The Center for Statistics states that for national reporting it needs an unduplicated headcount of all students in the 87,000 public elementary and secondary schools in this country.

The Project recommends that states and the Center for Statistics report one student "headcount" nationally for the Center's universe files.

The Project recommends that the definition and procedures for calculating headcount read:

Count of students registered in school
- o counted between the beginning of school and October 31
- o adds new entrants
- o does not subtract those leaving
- o is unduplicated count of students within a school

Based on the Project's findings, we believe that the count can be standardized across states by a combination of standard procedures by states and by developing crosswalks or bridges, when necessary, between current state counts and the Center for Statistics in an individual state data plan.

APPENDIX

Table 4
State-By-State Components of the Definition of Enrollment

	Alabama	Alaska	Arizona	Arkansas	California	Colorado	Connecticut	Delaware	Dist. of Columbia	Florida	Georgia	Hawaii	Idaho	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts	Michigan	Minnesota	Mississippi
Enrollment: Count of Students Registered During Entire School Term																									
Termed "Net Enrollment"																									
Termed "Membership"																									
Termed "Cumulative Membership"																									•
Termed "Registration"																			•						
Termed "Head Count"																					•				
Termed "Enrollment"	•		•	•	•		•		•		•		•	•		•		•		•				•	
BASIC DEFINITION																									
Adds new entrants as part of cumulative count	•			•	•		•		•		•		•	•		•		•		•		•			•
Does not subtract those leaving				•	•		•		•		•		•	•		•		•		•		•			•
Is unduplicate count of students	•		•	•	•		•		•		•		•	•		•		•		•		•			•
Discrepancies																									
Counts only at end of school year																									
Counts prior to end of school year							•																		
Excludes permanently withdrawn or transferred students																									
Subtracts students who leave	•						•																		
Counts students in attendance (present or absent) on last day of reporting month																									
Excludes pre-school students					•									•											
Excludes childrens centers					•									•											
Excludes community service programs					•									•											
Includes tuitioned-out students														•											
Excludes regional occupation programs					•									•											
State Collection/Definition Status																									
Data on enrollment not collected										•		•			•		•				•		•		
No definition						•		•																	

Table 4 Continued
State-By-State Components of the Definition of Enrollment

Enrollment: Count of Students Registered During Entire School Year	Missouri	Montana	Nebraska	Nevada	New Hampshire	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	North Carolina	North Dakota	Ohio	Oklahoma	Oregon	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island	South Carolina	South Dakota	Tennessee	Texas	Utah	Vermont	Virginia	Washington	West Virginia	Wisconsin	Wyoming
Termed "Net Enrollment"																					•			•		
Termed "Membership"															•			•								
Termed "Cumulative Membership"																										
Termed "Registration"																										
Termed "Head Count"																										
Termed "Enrollment"				•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•			•	•		•	•		•				•
BASIC DEFINITION																										
Adds new entrants as part of cumulative count				•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
Does not subtract those leaving					•	•	•		•	•		•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
Is unduplicate count of students				•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
Discrepancies																										
Counts only at end of school year															•	•	•									
Counts prior to end of school year																										
Excludes permanently withdrawn or transferred students																								•		
Subtracts students who leave				•											•											
Counts students in attendance (present or absent) on last day of reporting month																								•		
Excludes pre-school students													•													
Excludes childrens centers																										
Excludes community service programs																										
Includes tuitioned-out students																										
Excludes regional occupation programs																										
State Collection/Definition Status																										
Data on Enrollment not collected	•	•						•			•			•								•		•	
No definition																										

Table 5
State-By-State Components
of the Definition of
Fall Enrollment

	Alabama	Alaska	Arizona	Arkansas	California	Colorado	Connecticut	Delaware	Dist. of Columbi.	Florida	Georgia	Hawaii	Idaho	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts	Michigan	Minnesota	Mississippi
Fall Enrollment: Count of Students Registered in Fall School Year																									
Termed "Monthly Enrollment Count"																									
Termed "Membership"						•																			
Termed "Fall Membership"																					•				
Termed "Fall Registration"																							•		
Termed "October Membership"																			•						
Termed "Fall Enrollment"	•			•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•		•			•
Termed "Enrollment"															•										
BASIC DEFINITIONS																									
Counted on specified day	•			•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•
Counted on fourth Friday in September or October 1				•		•	•		•				•							•		•			
Discrepancies																									
Counted on second Friday in September																•									
Counted on second Friday after Labor Day															•										
Counted at end of first twenty student attendance days	•										•							•					•		•
Counted on September 13																									
Counted on September 15																	•								
Counted on third Friday in September																									
Counted on September 30														•							•				
Counted on last school day in September								•																	
Counted on Monday of first full week in October																									
Counted on third Wednesday in October				•																					

Table 5 Continued
State-By-State Components
of the Definition of
Fall Enrollment

	Missouri	Montana	Nebraska	Nevada	New Hampshire	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	North Carolina	North Dakota	Ohio	Oklahoma	Oregon	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island	South Carolina	South Dakota	Tennessee	Texas	Utah	Vermont	Virginia	Washington	West Virginia	Wisconsin	Wyoming
Fall Enrollment: Count of Students Registered in Fall [illegible]																										
Termed "Monthly Enrollment Count"									●																	
Termed "Membership"							●				●						●		●							
Termed "Fall Membership"																										
Termed "Fall Registration"																										
Termed "October Membership"															●											
Termed "Fall Enrollment"	●		●	●	●	●		●		●			●	●				●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Termed "Enrollment"																										
BASIC DEFINITIONS																										
Counted on specified day	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Counted on fourth Friday in September or October 1	●		●	●	●								●		●					●			●	●		●
Discrepancies																										
Counted on second Friday in September																										
Counted on second Friday after Labor Day																										
Counted at end of first twenty student attendance days																		●								
Counted on September 13																	●									
Counted on September 15																										
Counted on third Friday in September																										
Counted on September 30																									●	
Counted on last school day in September						●																●				
Counted on Monday of first full week in October											●								●							
Counted on third Wednesday in October																										

Table 5 Continued
State-By-State Components of the Definition of Fall Enrollment - Page 2

	Alabama	Alaska	Arizona	Arkansas	California	Colorado	Connecticut	Delaware	Dist. of Columbia	Florida	Georgia	Hawaii	Idaho	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts	Michigan	Minnesota	Mississippi
Counted on or about October 1																									
Counted on September 20																									
Counted on September 10																									
Counted on teachers' eighth working day												•													
Counted on fourth Friday after Labor Day																							•		
Counted on 40th day of school																									
State Collection/Definition Status																									
Data on Fall Enrollment not collected			•							•															
No definition																			•					•	

Table 5 Continued
State-By-State Components of the Definition of Fall Enrollment - Page 2

	Missouri	Montana	Nebraska	Nevada	New Hampshire	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	North Carolina	North Dakota	Ohio	Oklahoma	Oregon	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island	South Carolina	South Dakota	Tennessee	Texas	Utah	Vermont	Virginia	Washington	West Virginia	Wisconsin	Wyoming
Counted on or about October 1														•												
Counted on September 20																					•					
Counted on September 10										•																
Counted on teachers' eighth working day																										
Counted on fourth Friday after Labor Day																										
Counted on 40th day of school							•																			
State Collection/Definition Status																										
Data on Fall Enrollment not collected												•				•										
No definition																										

Table 6
State-By-State Components
of the Definition of
Membership

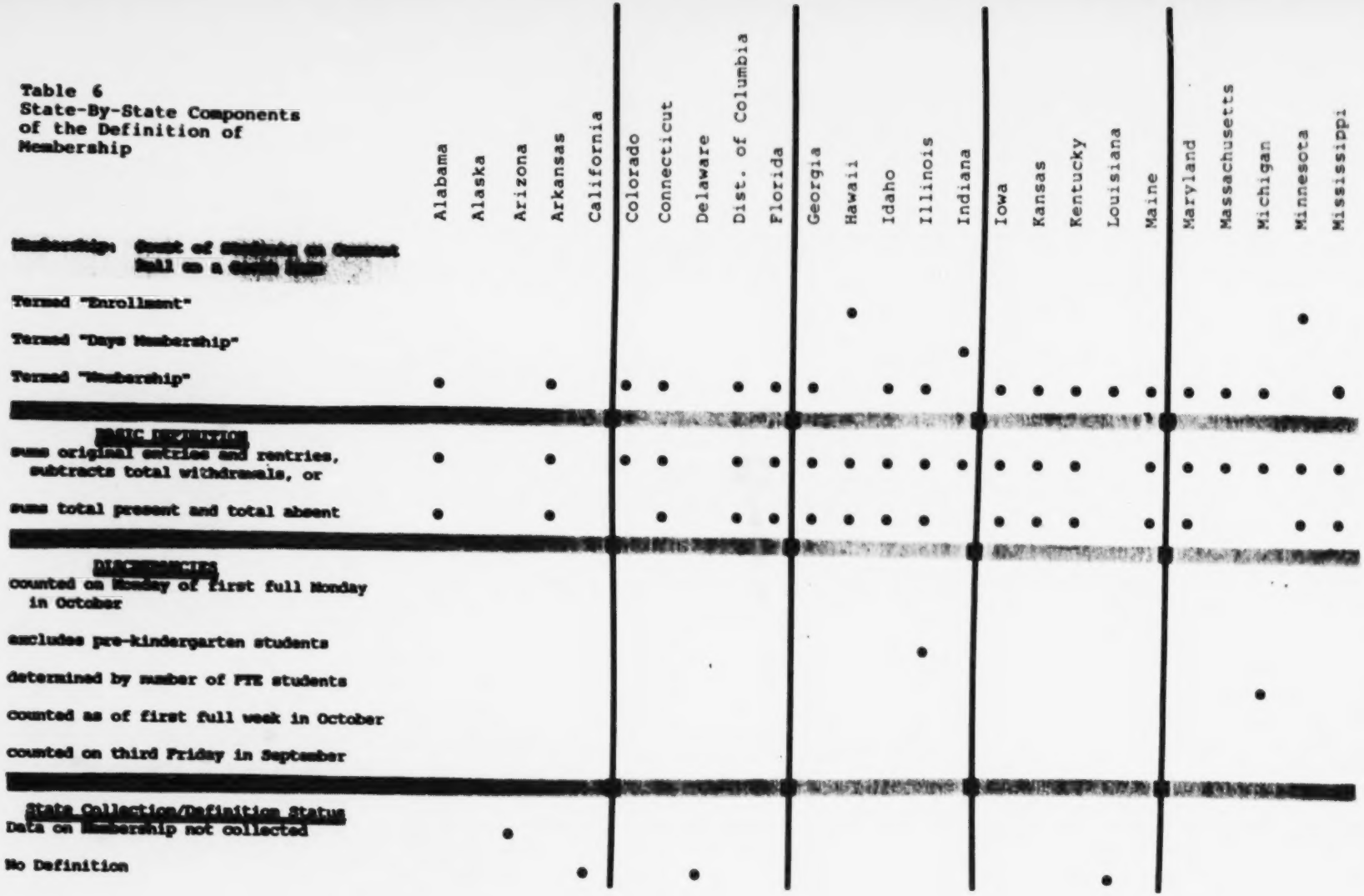


Table 6 Continued
State-By-State Components
of the Definition of
Membership

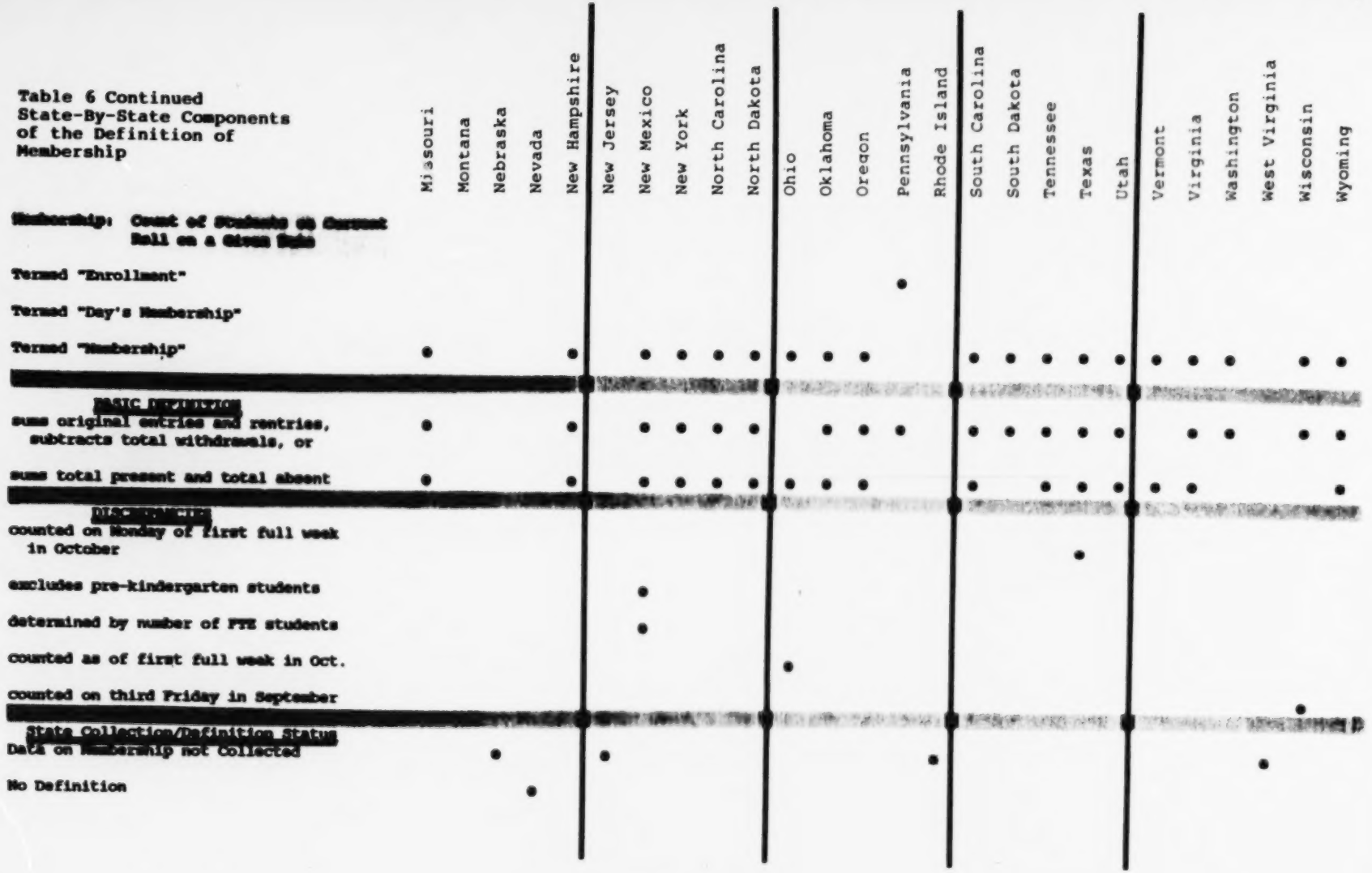


Table 7
State-By-State Components
of the Definition of
Average Daily Membership

	Alabama	Alaska	Arizona	Arkansas	California	Colorado	Connecticut	Delaware	Dist. of Columbia	Florida	Georgia	Hawaii	Idaho	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts	Michigan	Minnesota	Mississippi
Average Daily Membership: Average of Students in Membership when School is Actually in Session																									
Termed "Average Daily Enrollment"																									
Termed "Average Daily Membership"	•		•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	•			•
Termed "Days Membership"															•										
Termed "Aggregate Total Days"																									
BASIC DEFINITION																									
Divides (total) aggregate days in membership by total number of days school is in session	•		•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	•			•
DISCREPANCIES																									
determined by number of FTE students			•																						
determined by average of the number of students on roll at the 20th plus 40th day of school																									
determined over four week period in Oct.						•																			
State Collection/Definition Status																									
Data on Average Daily Membership not collected										•			•										•		
No Definition					•														•						

Table 7 Continued
State-By-State Components
of the Definition of
Average Daily Membership

	Missouri	Montana	Nebraska	Nevada	New Hampshire	New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	North Carolina	North Dakota	Ohio	Oklahoma	Oregon	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island	South Carolina	South Dakota	Tennessee	Texas	Utah	Vermont	Virginia	Washington	West Virginia	Wisconsin	Wyoming
Average Daily Membership: Average of Students in Membership when School is Actually in Session																										
Termed "Average Daily Enrollment"						•																				
Termed "Average Daily Membership"	•				•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
Termed "Day's Membership"																										
Termed "Aggregate Total Days"			•																							
BASIC DEFINITION																										
Divides (total) aggregate days in membership by total number of days school is in session	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•
DISCREPANCIES																										
determined by number of FTE students																									•	
determined by average of the number of students on roll at the 20th plus 40th day of school							•																			
determined over four week period in Oct.																										
State Collection/Definition Status																										
Data on Average Daily Membership not collected											•												•	•		
No Definition				•																						